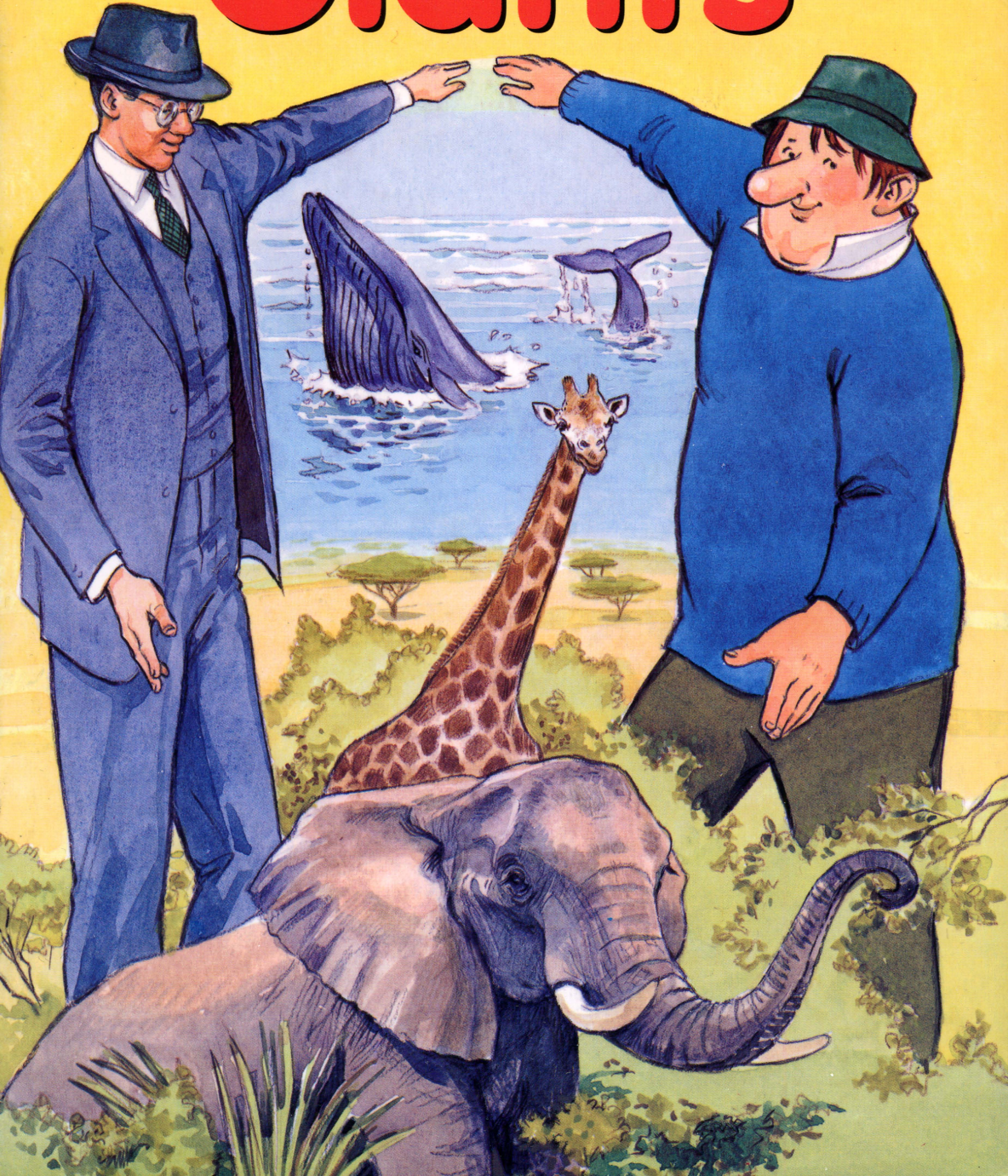


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Way Ahead Reader 3A

Giants





Giants

Keith Gaines



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The baby giant

A story from Ireland



Long, long ago in the country of Ireland people told stories about giants. In these stories, the giants were not very clever, but they were nice people, and they helped their friends. They pulled up trees that grew in the wrong place, or lifted cows into the next field.

One of the nicest and friendliest giants was called Finn. He was the only giant in his part of the country and he was married to a woman called Una. They lived in a house next to a mountain.



Finn looked after his twenty cows and he worked in the forest near his house. One day, when Finn was in the forest, one of his friends ran up to him.

‘Finn, Finn,’ shouted the friend. ‘Terrible news! There’s a great big ugly giant in town, and he’s not a nice kind giant like you. He doesn’t do any work and he takes our food. Now he’s looking for you. Tomorrow he’s going to throw you out of your house!’



Finn ran home at once.

‘What can I do? Oh, what can I do?’ Finn shouted to his wife. ‘There’s a new giant. He’s big, he’s ugly and he’s coming to get me! Oh, what can I do?’

‘Now stop shouting,’ said Una. ‘Sit down quietly in your chair and tell me all about it.’





Finn sat down and told his wife about the new giant.

‘He’s going to come here tomorrow,’ said Finn. ‘Get the suitcase, Una. We can put our clothes in it and leave tonight.’

‘We are not going anywhere!’ said Una. ‘We are staying here! Now go to bed and have a good night’s sleep. I have a plan.’



Una went to see her friend Kate. Kate had three children. The two youngest children were twin babies.

‘Can you help me, Kate?’ said Una. ‘Can I borrow the twins’ pram and some of their toys tomorrow? I only want them for one day.’

‘Yes of course,’ said Kate. ‘But why do you want them?’

‘We’re going to have a baby,’ said Una. ‘But only for tomorrow!’

Next morning Una got up early. First she went out into the garden and picked up lots of big stones. She carried the stones into her kitchen. Then she started to make some cakes. Giants eat big cakes, so Una made a big bowl of cake mixture. She took four big tins and put stones into three of them. Then she put the cake mixture into the tins, and put the tins into the oven.





Finn came into the kitchen.

‘Oh,’ said Finn. ‘You’re making some cakes for our journey. But why is that big pram here? Are we going to carry our things in it?’

‘I told you yesterday,’ said Una. ‘We are not going anywhere. Now, Finn, wash your face and put on your big white shirt. Then get into that pram.’

‘Why?’ asked Finn.

‘Don’t ask questions,’ said Una. ‘Do it!’

Five minutes later Finn got into the pram.

‘What can I do?’ said Finn. ‘I can’t get my legs into the pram!’

‘Just put them over the end of the pram,’ said Una. Then she put a big towel around Finn’s head, like a baby’s hat. She put a big blanket over Finn and put the toys into the pram with him.

‘Now stay in the pram and don’t move,’ said Una. ‘I’m going to get those cakes out.’

Una took the four cakes out of the oven.

Suddenly, there was a great noise at the door – bang, bang, bang!





Una opened the door. There was another giant, much bigger than Finn.

‘Where is Finn?’ shouted the giant. ‘Is he at home, or is he running away from me?’

Finn lay very still in the pram.



‘I’m sorry,’ said Una. ‘Finn’s not here at the moment. He went out to pull up twenty trees.’

‘He’s pulling up twenty trees?’ said the new giant. ‘That’s a day’s work.’

‘Oh no!’ said Una. ‘For Finn it’s only ten minutes’ work. Come in and sit down. Would you like a nice cup of tea?’



The giant started to walk through the door.

‘Just a minute,’ said Una. ‘Before you come in, can you do a very small job for me?’

‘No!’ said the giant. Then he lifted his nose. ‘I can smell something very nice,’ he said.

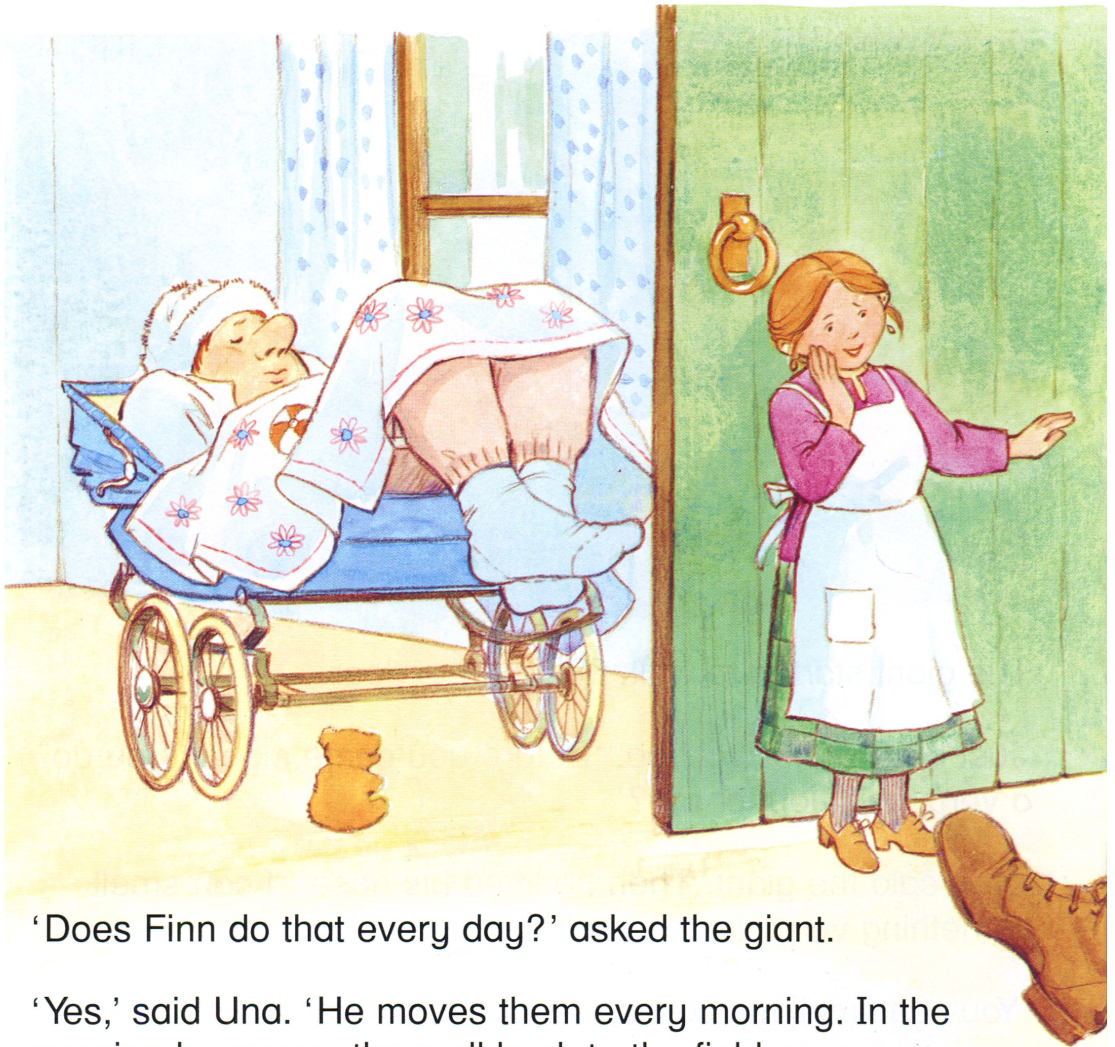
‘You can smell my cakes,’ said Una. ‘Do that little job for me, and you can have one.’

‘All right,’ said the giant. ‘What is it?’

‘Well, Finn forgot to move the cows this morning,’ said Una. ‘Can you carry them from this field to that one?’ Una pointed to the fields, on either side of the mountain.

‘Finn always does it the quick way. He puts one cow under each arm and runs over the mountain.’

The giant’s mouth dropped open.



‘Does Finn do that every day?’ asked the giant.

‘Yes,’ said Una. ‘He moves them every morning. In the evening he moves them all back to the field near our house. He does it in about five minutes. Just do that and then you can have a nice cup of tea.’

Two hours later the giant came through the door and sat down in a chair. His face was red and he was very tired.

‘Oh dear,’ said Una. ‘Your tea is cold now.’

‘Where’s Finn?’ said the giant.

Finn lay very still in the pram.



‘He isn’t here now,’ said Una. ‘When he came home, I sent him to the bakery for a loaf of bread.’

‘I can go and meet him,’ said the giant. ‘Which way is the bakery?’

Una pointed toward the mountain.

‘Go over the mountain,’ she said. ‘Walk to the Irish Sea, and then swim across...’

‘Just a minute,’ said the giant. ‘Did you say “swim”?’

‘Yes,’ said Una. ‘We get our bread from a nice little bakery in London, you see.’

‘What?’ shouted the giant. ‘You get your bread from a bakery in England?’

‘Yes,’ said Una. ‘It’s not very near, but I like English bread and Finn likes to have a run and a little swim each day.’



‘Not very near!’ shouted the giant. ‘It’s hundreds of miles away! How does he swim across the Irish Sea with a loaf of bread?’

‘He swims with one arm,’ said Una. ‘With the other arm he holds the bread above the water.’

The giant was not very happy.

‘I’m a bit tired,’ he said. ‘I’m going to stay here and wait for Finn.’

Finn lay very still in the pram.



Una went into the kitchen. She came out a moment later with a big bottle.

‘Can you do one more little job for me?’ she said. ‘I need some water. Can you go to the river and fill this bottle with water? Then I can make you another cup of tea.’

‘Where’s the river?’ asked the giant. ‘Is it in Scotland?’

‘No, no,’ said Una. ‘The river is under the mountain. It comes out of the ground on the other side. You can walk round to the other side of the mountain to get water, but Finn always lifts the mountain to fill the bottle.’

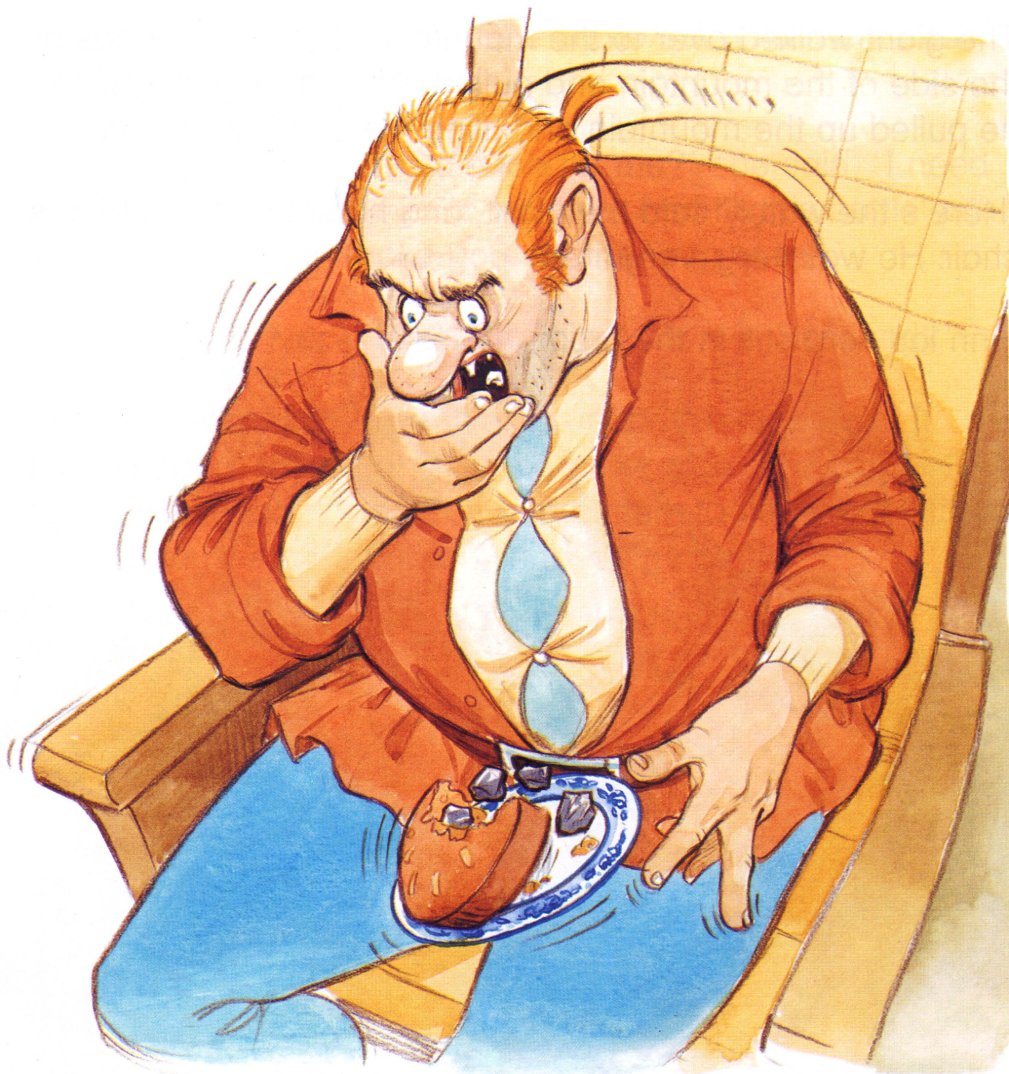


The giant walked over to the mountain. He put his hands on the side of the mountain and pulled. After a very long time he pulled up the mountain and filled the bottle with water.

‘Here’s the water,’ said the giant, and he sat down in Finn’s chair. He was very, very tired.

Finn lay very still in the pram.





‘Thank you,’ said Una. ‘Now I can make you a nice cup of tea, and you can have one of my cakes.’ She looked at the cakes carefully, and gave the giant a cake with stones in.

The giant took a big bite out of the cake.

‘OW!’ shouted the giant. ‘My teeth hurt! What’s in these cakes?’

‘Be quiet!’ said Una. ‘The baby is sleeping.’

Una went to the pram.

‘Cry, Finn,’ she whispered, and Finn cried like a baby.

‘Look,’ said Una. ‘After all your noise, the baby is waking up.’

‘Don’t cry, my little baby,’ she said to Finn. ‘Here’s a cake for you.’ She gave Finn the only cake with no stones in.

‘Mmm,’ said Finn and he quickly ate the cake. The giant got up and looked into the pram.



‘That’s a very big baby,’ said the giant. ‘But – where’s the cake?’

‘He likes my cakes,’ said Una. ‘He eats them very quickly.’

‘I broke my tooth on your cake,’ said the giant. ‘Are your baby’s teeth very strong?’

‘Oh, no!’ said Una, and she laughed. ‘He’s only a little baby. He doesn’t have any teeth at all!’

The giant looked closely at Finn.



'Hello baby,' said the giant, and he put his finger into Finn's mouth. Finn bit the giant's finger very hard.

'OW!' shouted the giant. 'My finger! My finger!' The giant looked at the baby again. Then he turned and walked quickly to the door.



‘I’m going now,’ said the giant. ‘I’m not going to wait for Finn.’

‘Don’t go,’ said Una. ‘Stay and have your cup of tea. Finn really wants to meet you.’

‘Well I don’t want to meet Finn,’ said the giant. ‘That baby has no teeth, but he can eat your hard cakes. Do I want to meet his father? No thank you! I’m going to leave now!’

He ran out of the house, and Finn and Una never saw him again.



The baby giant – questions

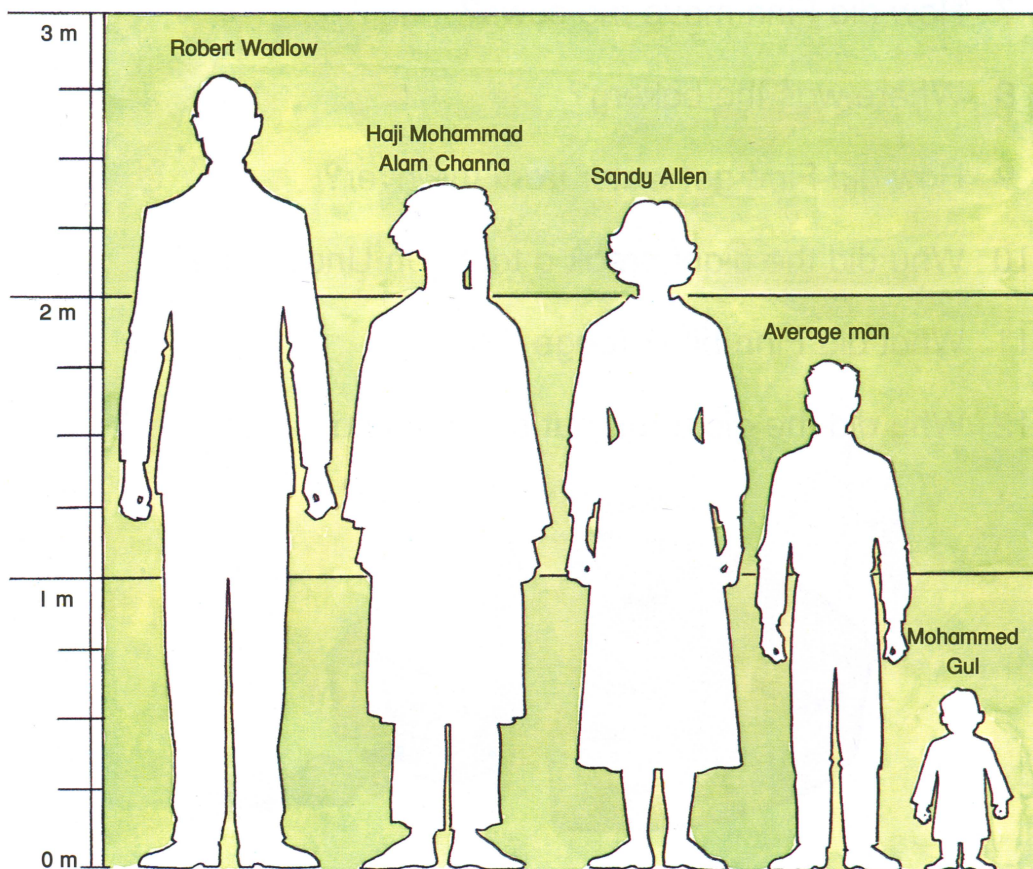
- 1 What was the name of Finn's wife?
- 2 Where did Finn live?
- 3 What did Una borrow from Kate?
- 4 What did Una get from the garden? (page 8)
- 5 What did Finn put on? (page 9)
- 6 Who got into the pram?
- 7 How did Finn move the cows?
- 8 Where was the bakery?
- 9 How did Finn get water from the river?
- 10 Why did the giant break a tooth on Una's cake?
- 11 What did Finn bite? (page 23)
- 12 Why did the giant run out of Finn's house?



Giant people

In nearly every part of the world, people tell stories about giants. In some stories the giants are just very tall men. In other stories the giants are bigger than the highest mountain. But these are all stories. Let's look at some real giants.

The tallest man living today is Haji Mohammad Alam Channa. He was born in 1956, in Pakistan. The tallest woman is Sandy Allen, who was born in 1955 and who lives in the USA. They are both 2 metres 33 centimetres tall.





The tallest man of all time was an American called Robert Wadlow. He was born in 1918 and he was 2 metres 72 centimetres tall. His hands were 32 centimetres long. (This book is 23 centimetres from top to bottom!)

The shortest man in the world is Mohammed Gul from India. He is just 57 centimetres tall!



Two hundred years ago, in England, people called Daniel Lambert a giant.

He weighed 335 kilos. He was 1 metre 80 centimetres tall – and 2 metres 33 centimetres round the middle!

Jon Minnoch (1941–1983) was the heaviest man ever. He weighed more than 630 kilos!

When he went into hospital, he slept on two beds tied together. When he wanted to turn over in bed, he needed thirteen people to help him.

Giant people – questions

- 1 Where was Haji Mohammad Alam Channa born?
- 2 Where was the tallest woman born?
- 3 Where did the tallest man of all time live?
- 4 Robert Wadlow's hands were longer than this book. True or false?
- 5 Where does the shortest man live?
- 6 Who was the heaviest man in the world?
- 7 How many people helped Jon Minnoch to turn over in bed?



Giant animals

The biggest animal in the world does not live on land at all – it lives in the sea. It is the blue whale. Some blue whales are more than 30 metres long. These whales are as heavy as 35 elephants, or 2000 people.

Blue whales make singing noises to each other. These whale ‘songs’ can travel hundreds of kilometres through the water to other blue whales. A whale song is the loudest sound in the world from a living animal.



The biggest animal on land is the African elephant. Often these elephants are more than three metres tall and weigh more than 5000 kilos. The tallest animal on land is the giraffe. From its feet to the top of its head it can grow as high as six metres!



Giant animals – questions

- 1 What is the biggest animal in the world?
- 2 What is the loudest sound in the world from a living animal?
- 3 What is the biggest animal on land?
- 4 Which is taller – the African elephant or the giraffe?
- 5 How tall can giraffes grow?



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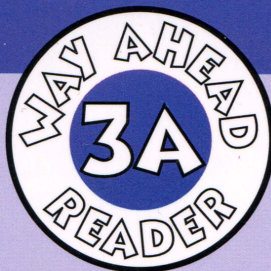
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Way Ahead Readers are an enjoyable way to consolidate and develop the reading skills acquired through the *Way Ahead* course books.

There are three Readers at each level, and these are carefully graded to ensure that children not only practise reading at an appropriate level of difficulty, but also gain confidence in approaching new texts.

Readers 1C, 2C and 3C are presented as plays. While they can be used in exactly the same way as the other Readers, children can also act them out in groups, or as part of a presentation for parents.

The Way Ahead Readers are:

1A	How many colours?	0-333-67493-6
1B	Robots	0-333-67494-4
1C	Where's Tiggy?	0-333-77211-3
2A	Letters from home	0-333-67495-2
2B	I like shopping!	0-333-67496-0
2C	Hello, Mr Snowman!	0-333-77212-1
3A	Giants	0-333-67497-9
3B	Fairground adventure	0-333-67498-7
3C	All the fun of the fair	0-333-77213-x
4A	Look out for dragons!	0-333-67499-5
4B	Don't open the bottle!	0-333-67500-2
4C	Looking at ... people	0-333-77214-8
5A	The sunbird mystery	0-333-67501-0
5B	Swiss Family Robinson	0-333-67502-9
5C	Looking at ... machines	0-333-77215-6
6A	A journey to the centre of the Earth	0-333-67503-7
6B	Gulliver's travels in Lilliput	0-333-67504-5
6C	Looking at ... our world	0-333-77216-4

